

THE FRANCES D. JERMAIN  
BRANCH LIBRARY  
TOLEDO, OHIO

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BUILT IN 1917  
FROM THE CARNEGIE FUND



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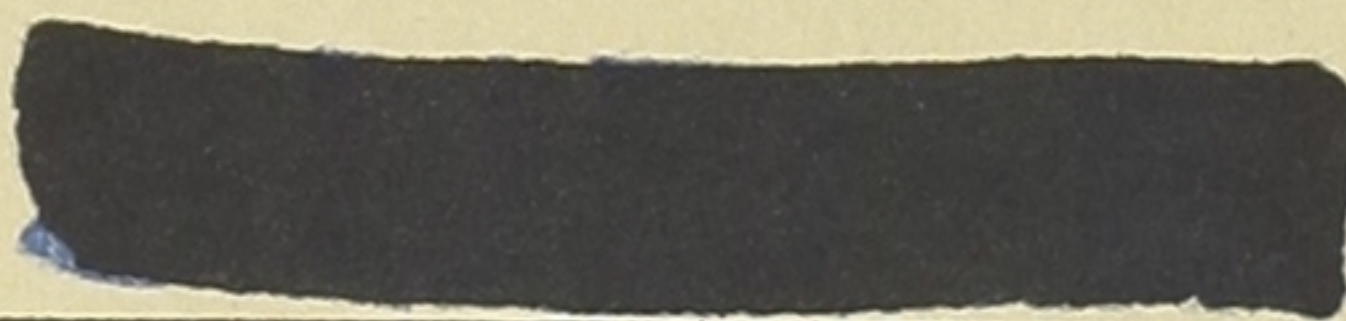
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THE  
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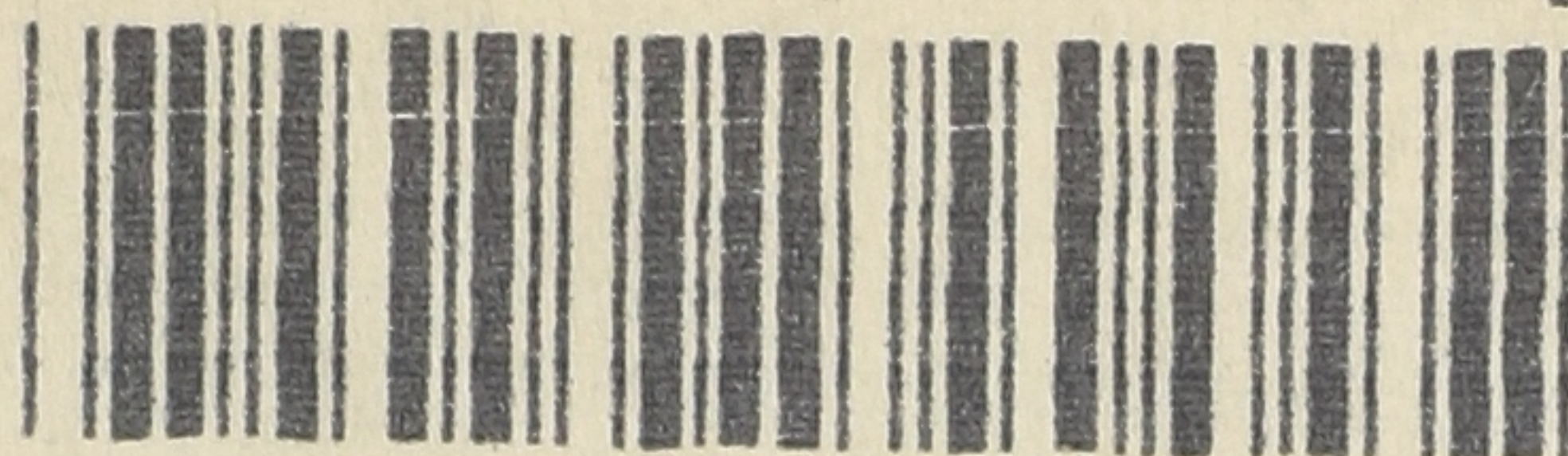
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Toledo-Lucas County Public Library



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MRS. FRANCES D. JERMAIN



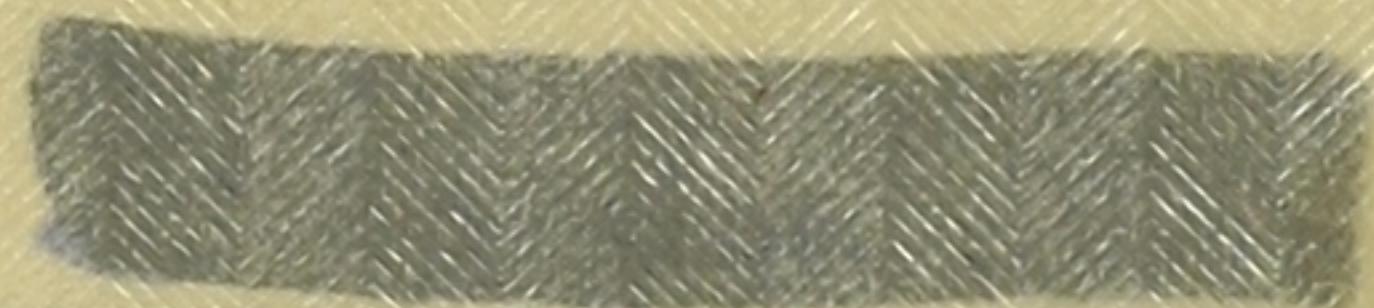


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MRS. FRANCES D. JERMAIN

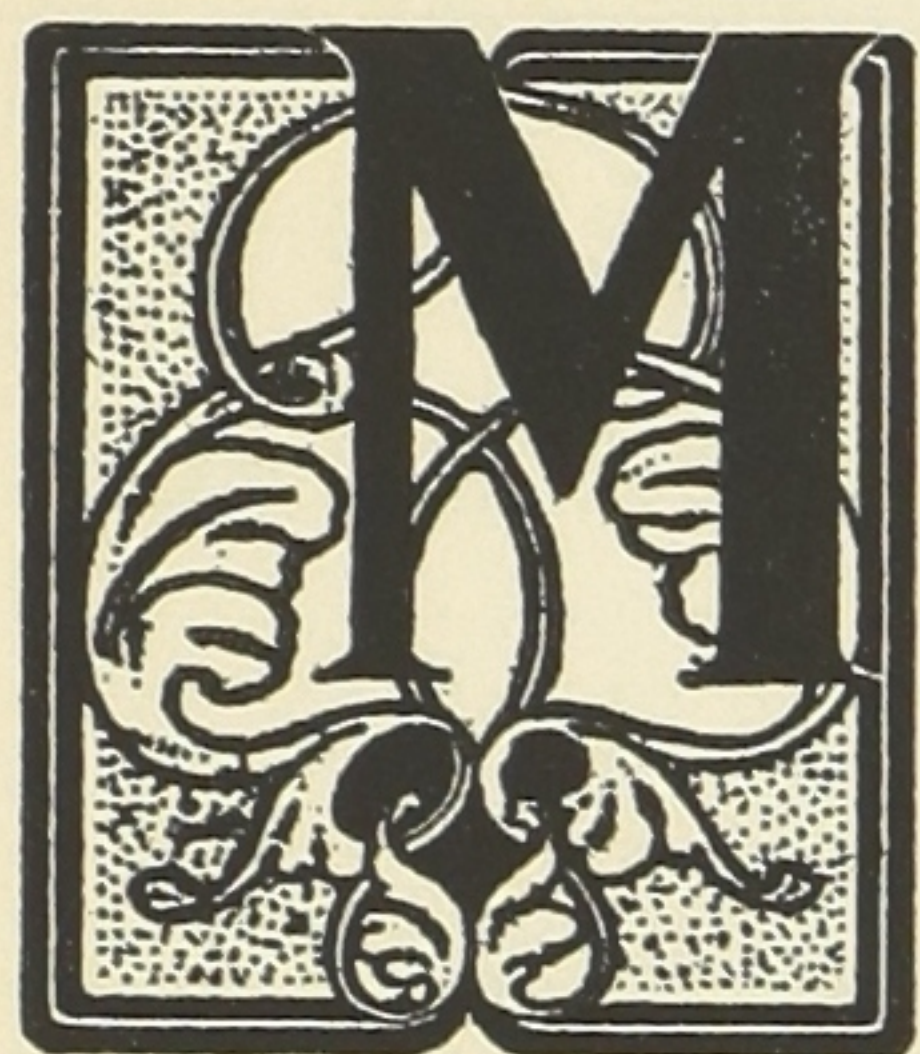
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RS. FRANCES D. JERMAIN was born in Ann Arbor, Michigan. She was the daughter of the eminent Presbyterian clergyman, William David Page, and her girlhood was spent in Ann Arbor and Monroe, Michigan, and after her marriage to Sylvanus Pierson Jermain she made her home in Adrian, Michigan, and later in Chillicothe, Ohio, until the death of her husband when she moved to Toledo, Ohio, with her six young children.

She was the mother of eight children, two of whom died in infancy. In 1884 she was appointed librarian of the Toledo Public Library, a position which she held for nearly twenty-five years or practically until the time of her death. During this time of devotion to her important duties she also found time to prepare a work requiring great research and correspondence with some of the most eminent scholars of Europe and which is entitled "In the Path of the Alphabet." This work her family has had published and widely circulated as a fitting memorial to her. Her knowledge of books was remarkable and with all of her deep and versatile learning her domestic nature lost nothing of its pre-eminence as was so beautifully developed in the rearing of a large family of children. She was highly skilled in all of the domestic arts. Her public duties never interfered with her home life, and the long years of her devotion to her children

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found its reward in the faithfulness of the children to whom she was the ideal of everything womanly and beautiful. She died in the full strength of her mental powers, only putting her pen down a few days before her death and retaining her interest in her home life to the very last.

Mr. William H. Maher paid her the following beautiful tribute:

“It will be very hard to realize that our friend, Mrs. Jermain, has said to us her final ‘good night.’ I say our friend advisedly, for she was friendly to all who came within the circle of her influence, and who is here who was outside of or beyond that? What woman of Toledo has radiated for forty years past such helpful, kindly, courteous refining atmosphere, and where was one whose heart was so full of love and sympathy and honest desire to be helpful to every one who came near her? I know of no other. Most of her friends of the younger generation will not remember a time when she was not the gentle, helpful, cultured manager of our city library. Some of us can go farther back and testify to the wonderful change made in that room when she became the ruling power. She did not handle books as if they were merchandise, but as if each was a sensitive soul. And her knowledge of them was not a superficial one, and of their titles only—she knew the books themselves, and was exceedingly happy in characterizing them in a few brief sentences.

“I loved to listen to Mrs. Jermain’s voice, always so gentle, and to watch the ease with which exactly



the right word dropped from her lips. And she wrote just as she talked—easy, graceful, illuminating. My first acquaintance with her came from my reading some pleasant sketches she wrote for the old *Commercial*. It was a pity that she wrote so rarely in later years.

“What a brave woman she was! She had to be father and mother to a family of small children, and nobly did she fulfill the dual part. Her children are the living evidence of her loving ability and care, and of her refining influence. Her memory will be as sweet as that of a gentle saint who bore her burdens quietly and prayerfully; whose sympathy was always ready and genuine, and whose influence was spiritually and intellectually uplifting. Her last good night would be sad to recall, if that was the end of all, but it loses its sting when we remember that in some brighter clime she is waiting to bid us a bright good morning.”

The following token of appreciation was written by Mr. Harvey Scribner upon the occasion of Mrs. Jermain's death:

“Last night Mrs. Frances D. Jermain fell into the sleep that knows no waking, as peacefully and sweetly as she had lived. No man or woman who has lived in Toledo had a larger acquaintance or more devoted friends than Mrs. Jermain. I was a member of the Board at the time she was elected librarian, in 1884, and continued as such for many years, and during all that time never heard any but the kindest expressions by patrons of the library for Mrs. Jermain. She was an indefatigable



worker, read all the books pertaining to libraries and library work, kept up with the reports from the different libraries of the country, and noted and availed herself of the suggestions made by the leading librarians of this and the old countries. She was an ideal librarian. I doubt if there was a better informed person anywhere on books and historical characters than Mrs. Jermain. She was a living encyclopedia. When patrons of the library asked her about a country, the Philippine Islands, for instance, or a historical event or character, she would refer them instantly to the book that gave the best information, and frequently would tell them all they wanted to know. She prepared the catalogue of the books of the library, containing at that time some 50,000 volumes—a work that was admirable for its classification and the facility it afforded for information. She suggested and carried out the project for the juvenile library and inaugurated the open shelf system now in popular use.

“Always at her post, patiently and intelligently performing her duties with so much grace and winning courtesy, she won the heartfelt affection of the librarians, the trustees and the public. She can render an account of her life that her family and friends will always remember with pride. Her death was sweet and beautiful as her life. ‘May flights of angels sing her to rest’.”

Her service as librarian of the Toledo Public Library has, in 1917, received at the hands of the Board of Trustees of the Toledo Public Library, a most beautiful and fitting recognition in the naming



of the North Branch Library built from the Carnegie Fund, The Frances D. Jermain Library. The beautiful building stands at the corner of Galena and Superior Streets, opposite Riverside Park. The action of the Trustees has received the general and grateful appreciation of the people of Toledo who admired and loved her.

Concerning the naming of the North Branch Library, Mr. Robinson Locke, who for many years was a trustee of the Toledo Public Library, paid her the following tribute editorially in the *Toledo Blade*:

“To Mrs. Jermain’s Honor

“Mrs. Jermain has justly been spoken of as the Mother of Toledo’s Public Library. Her eager, unconscious kindness will be remembered by everyone who used the library while she had charge of it. She gave the institution not simply direction and a rare ability, but also a personality. If in those days books were none too plentiful and it might happen, as it did often, that the much desired book had been captured by an earlier patron, there was yet pleasure in meeting with Mrs. Jermain and upon her urging to make another selection.

“Her name deserves the honor thus bestowed upon it.”













THE FRANKLIN  
TOLSON







